

Statement of Congresswoman Carolyn B. Maloney

December 2, 2003

Opposing the 'Luxury Cruise Ship' Plan for the Republican National Convention in New York City

Rep. Carolyn Maloney (Manhattan and Queens) joined hotel, restaurant, and labor leaders at the Grand Hyatt in midtown today to voice their strong opposition to the Republican leadership's plan to stay on a foreign cruise ship during next year's convention in New York. Congresswoman Maloney's statement on this issue follows:

"Not only was I excited that the Republican National Convention was coming to our great city, I had hoped that we Democrats would hold ours here too. A convention should give a city a charge – over-booked hotels, full restaurants, bustling shops. It would also give my colleagues who wonder about New Yorkers a chance to meet real New Yorkers and live amongst them. But the more we find out about the Republican conventioners' plans, the more we learn that they aren't really coming here – they'll be staying offshore.

We have the greatest city in the world, with the greatest accommodations in the world, the greatest food in the world and the greatest shopping in the world. Still, we're apparently not good enough for the Republican convention planners.

They've taken \$20 million in city money. They're getting \$25 million more in security. They'll get extra publicity for staging their event in New York. But what's in it for us? What's in it for the hospitality industry, which was devastated by 9/11? What's in it for hotel and restaurant workers? Not much at all under this luxury cruise ship plan.

Republican conventioners will be floating in an exclusive fortress on the Hudson, skirting U.S. labor, wage and tax laws aboard a foreign ship, while we are left in the City, footing the bill.

According to the *New York Times*, the Republicans have no plans to back down from this idea. Today my colleagues and I wrote the governor urging him to help scuttle this plan. The Republican leadership in Washington has shortchanged New York City repeatedly – be it for the 9/11 recovery or homeland security assistance. I hope that the governor will help spare us this latest indignity. *New York Magazine* reported yesterday that the convention's chairman has ruled out using ground zero as a political prop, and I commend him for that. I urge Tom DeLay to follow suit and abandon this ship."

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